

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 /069 W

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R 241653Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1226

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 15269

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, IT, FR

SUBJECT: QUAI DESK AND PLANNING STAFF OPINIONS ON  
ITALIAN POLITICS

1. IN DISCUSSION WITH S/P MEMBER DE PORTE AND EMBOFF,  
SOUTHERN EUROPE DIRECTOR GELADE AND DESK OFFICER  
DEBENEST PRESENTED DETAILED REVIEW OF FRENCH THINKING ON  
ITALY. THEY SAW THE ELECTION OF FANFANI AS DC PRESI-  
DENT AS A SYMBOL OF THE PARTY'S UNWILLINGNESS TO CHANGE  
AND SUGGESTED IRONICALLY THAT ONLY THE DEATH OF THE  
PARTY'S PRESENT LEADERS WOULD OPEN THE WAY TO OTHERS.  
THEY DOUBTED THAT ITALY COULD WAIT. THEY MADE NO PRE-  
DICTIONS ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE JUNE 20-21 ELECTION  
BUT GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT ITALY'S PROBLEMS COULD NOT  
BE TACKLED WITHOUT SOME ROLE FOR THE COMMUNISTS. WHETHER  
THIS SHOULD BE IN THE CABINET OR IN SOME KIND OF  
SUPPORTING ROLE FOR A RENEWED CENTER-LEFT WAS LEFT  
VAGUE. AS TO WHAT ITALY'S FRIENDS MIGHT DO TO HELP NOW,  
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THEY SUGGESTED THAT AT THIS STAGE SILENCE MIGHT BE THE

BEST COURSE. IN DEBENEST'S VIEW THE ITALIANS HAVE NO SENSE OF THE STATE BUT ARE STRONGLY NATIONALISTIC AND RESENTFUL OF OUTSIDE COUNSEL.

2. GELADE AND DEBENEST DID NOT HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT HOW TO HANDLE PCI ENTRY TO POWER SHOULD THAT TAKE PLACE BUT THE DRIFT OF THEIR THINKING SEEMED TO BE TOWARD ACCOMMODATION. THEY RECOGNIZED BUT DID NOT COMMENT IN DETAIL ON THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THAT WERE LIKELY TO FACE ITALY, AND ITS FOREIGN CREDITORS, AFTER THE ELECTION.

3. DE PORTE AND EMBOFF ALSO REVIEWED THE ITALIAN SITUATION WITH CAP (PLANNING STAFF) MEMBERS MOREL AND D'AMECOURT. DISCUSSION OPENED AS A TOUR D'HORIZON BUT THE FRENCH CHOSE TO FOCUS IT ON ITALY. THEY DID NOT THINK, AS OF NOW, THAT PCI WOULD DO QUITE AS WELL AS PRESS HAS BEEN SUGGESTING. THE EFFORTS OF THE CHURCH, THE DC MACHINE AND EXTERNAL FACTORS MAY WELL BLUNT THE PCI DRIVE. THEY THEREFORE EXPECT DC TO DROP ONLY SLIGHTLY AS COMPARED TO JUNE 1975, PCI TO GAIN ONLY SLIGHTLY IF AT ALL, PSI TO GAIN SLIGHTLY, AND SMALLER PARTIES TO SUFFER MORE SERIOUS LOSSES.

4. THE CAP MEMBERS LOOK BEYOND THE ELECTIONS TO A NUMBER OF SCENARIOS. THE LEAST LIKELY WOULD BE A GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT, WHICH WOULD HAVE ONLY A SMALL MAJORITY. CAP SEES THIS AS THE MOST DANGEROUS OF THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES BECAUSE IT WOULD ACCENTUATE POLARIZATION OF ITALY AND WOULD RADICALIZE BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT. IT WOULD ALSO CREATE SERIOUS FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS. A FRENCH SOURCE WAS RECENTLY TOLD BY PAJETTA THAT SUCH A GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE PRO-SOVIET BUT MORE OR LESS NEUTRALIST.

5. IF THE DC DID BETTER THAN CAP EXPECTS IT MIGHT AGAIN DOMINATE THE NEXT GOVERNMENT, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE SMALLER PARTIES INCLUDING THE PSI. THEY DOUBT THAT IT WILL GET ENOUGH SEATS TO BE IN A POSITION TO DO THIS.

6. THE MOST PROBABLE OUTCOME, IN CAP VIEW, IS A RENEWED CENTER-LEFT WITH SOME DEFINED ARRANGEMENT FOR PCI SUP-

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PORT FROM OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT. THE PCI MIGHT PREFER THIS BECAUSE IT WOULD GIVE THEM INFLUENCE AND CONSTITUTE A STEP FORWARD WHILE LETTING THEM AVOID RESPONSIBILITY IN WHAT WILL BE A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION. IT WOULD ALSO, HOWEVER, GIVE THE DC A NEW LEASE ON LIFE, OR AT LEAST ON POWER. WHETHER THE PARTY WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE REPRIEVE TO REORGANIZE ITSELF IS DOUBTFUL, IN THE CAP VIEW. BUT THE FRENCH STILL HAVE SOME CONFIDENCE IN

THE ABILITY OF THE ITALIANS TO MUDDLE THROUGH, AND THIS  
OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION IS THE FORM THEY THINK THAT IS  
LIKELY TO TAKE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 15269

7. THE FRENCH PLANNERS SAID THAT GISCARD HAD RECENTLY  
SENT PIERRE ABELIN, A VETERAN FRENCH CENTRIST, TO  
COUNSEL REFORM ON THE DC. THEY WERE SKEPTICAL ABOUT  
WHAT HE ACCOMPLISHED. BEYOND THIS THEY DO NOT THINK  
THERE IS MUCH FRANCE CAN DO BEFORE THE ELECTION OR,  
APPARENTLY, MUCH THAT ANYONE CAN DO EITHER.

8. AS FOR THE POST-ELECTION SITUATION, THEY RECOGNIZE  
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES  
ITALY WILL THEN FACE. HERE THEY TEND TO FOCUS ON BONN'S  
POSSIBLE ROLE, THOUGH THEY WONDERED IF IT WOULD BE WILL-

ING TO PUT MUCH MORE MONEY INTO ITALY DURING THE GERMAN  
ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN.

9. IN CAP'S VIEW, ECONOMIC RECOVERY IS THE KEY TO THE  
DESIRED RESTABILIZATION OF ITALIAN POLITICS IN A SENSE  
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ACCEPTABLE TO ITS ALLIES. ECONOMIC AID THEREFORE SEEMS  
TO THEM THE MOST IMPORTANT LEVERAGE THE MAJOR ALLIES  
HAVE ON ITALIAN AFFAIRS.

10. COMMENT: THIS CAP CONCLUSION APPEARED TO APPLY TO  
THE SITUATION IN WHICH THE PCI WOULD SHARE POWER WITH THE  
DC, WHETHER IN OR OUT OF THE CABINET, AS WELL AS TO  
THE SITUATION IN WHICH IT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE EXCLUDED.  
THE PLANNERS REJECT WHAT THEY CALL A "POLITIQUE DU  
PIRE," WHICH THEY THINK WOULD MAKE A BAD SITUATION WORSE.  
GAMMON

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